1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Apart from the fact that the head of the segment is, or once was, a member of the royal lineage, there is little difference between a cadet segment and a commoner one. The majority of segments in the system as a whole have been founded by commoners and the majority of extant villages are the headquarters of commoner segments. Before the conquest, one of the principal mechanisms for ensuring the spatial dispersal of an expanding population was the formation of new large villages, the headquarters of segments formed for bevies of queens. After the conquest a comparatively stationary population has dispersed not under the leadership of queens but by the formation of new segments by commoners, not all of them even lieutenants of their lords.

Some indication of the distribution of present-day villages among these various types is given in Table VII. This table is based on 82 village histories collected in the general course of fieldwork. The villages were selected casually and arbitrarily, without reference to this particular problem. I also collected the histories of several counties, in the course of which I became acquainted with other village histories. I have excluded these from the sample to avoid weighing it too heavily with capital and chief's villages, whose names are mentioned in county histories. In consequence, the sample contains no chief's village at all. It also contains too few villages that have come into Ngoniland from other tribal areas, as can be seen by comparing it with Table IV (p. 118). Nevertheless it should serve to show the rough orders of magnitude.

It will be seen that about four out of five at the present time are commoner villages, and that about half of these were already in existence as distinct villages in 1898. On the other hand, seven out of the nine royal villages in the sample were founded before 1898.

Apart from the six incoming villages and the two founded by a labour immigrant and Administrative action, all the villages in the sample have some segment of the old residential system, or its modern equivalent, as their core. Most of the commoner villages have been formed by the differentiation of a quasi-relative, cognatic or affinal relative from his lord. By contrast, most royal villages have been formed by differentiation between bevies of co-wives or between sons and their fathers.

In pre-conquest times there was a dogma that the chief owned all the cattle in the tribe. This dogma related to the structural position of the chief as head of the highest segment, and therefore in authority over the State and its resources rather than to the day-to-day care and disposal of cattle. There were cattle in each village